



The Strange Case of MARY PAGE

The Great McClure Mystery Story, Written by
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Kirk Detective Stories. Read the Story
and See the Essayay Moving Pictures

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SYNOPSIS

MARY PAGE, an actress, is accused of the murder of James Pollock, and is defended by her lover Philip Langdon. Pollock has been pursuing Mary for many months endeavoring to win her love and her hand in marriage, but his attentions have been very unwelcome to her. Knowing her stage aspirations, he has, unknown to her, financed her starring tour under the management of Daniels. On the night of the murder, Mary leaves the banquet hall in the Hotel Republic and enters the Gray Room alone expecting to meet Langdon. She has been lured there by Pollock, who has been drinking. A few moments later a shot is heard and Langdon and others, upon entering the Gray Room find James Pollock shot through the heart and Mary Page lying in a faint beside him with Pollock's revolver not six inches from the ends of her fingers.

At Mary's trial she admits she had the revolver. Pollock had invaded her dressing room at the theatre, Langdon had come to her rescue, the revolver had been knocked from Pollock's hand and Mary had seized and retained it. She had put it in her hand bag the night of the murder intending giving it to Langdon. Her maid testifies that Mary threatened Pollock with it previously, and Mary's leading man implicates Langdon. How Mary disappeared from the scene of the crime is a mystery. Brandon tells of a strange hand print he saw on Mary's shoulder. Further evidence shows that horror of drink produces temporary insanity in Mary. The defense is "repressed psychosis." Witnesses described Mary's flight from her intoxicated father and her father's suicide. Nurse Walton describes the kidnapping of Mary by Pollock.

and Amy Barton tells of Mary's struggles to become an actress, of Pollock's pursuit of her and of another occasion when the smell of liquor drove Mary insane. There is evidence that Daniels, Mary's manager, threatened Pollock. Mary faints on the stand and again goes insane when a policeman offers her whisky. Daniels testifies that Pollock threatened to kill Mary and Langdon and actually attempted to kill Langdon. Two witnesses describe Mary's flight to the street from the hotel and her abduction by men from a gambling place near by. Further evidence seems to incriminate Daniels. Maggie Hale, inmate of a gambling den, testifies that she was at the hotel and heard two men quarreling in the Gray Room a short time before the murder. Her evidence seems to increase suspicion against Daniels.

DANIELS' PROMISE

LANGDON surveyed the huge pile of mail on his desk with a half rueful, half whimsical smile. Despite the fact that he had worked half the night, his cold plunge and a cup of strong coffee had sent him down town early, filled with energy, and he had planned to "clean up" his letters at the office before proceeding to court.

He had not, however, counted upon the sympathy and the antipathy that the now famous trial of Mary Page was arousing.

Nor had he counted upon the propensity of the American public to



This Man Omitted the Usual Formality of Signing His Name.

write letters, and in consequence it was not a few hours' work, but the labor of days that lay before him in that multitudinous array of envelopes.

There were letters denouncing him because the writers thought he was aiding in the miscarriage of justice because of his efforts on behalf of Mary Page; there were others persisting him extravagantly for his efforts in her behalf; there were still others threatening him with death if he persisted in his efforts to clear Mary of the charge of murder, efforts which would expose certain members of the underworld in the great city. There were letters from sane people and insane people, letters from sentimental girls and equally sentimental young men who had been impressed with Mary's beauty and innocence; there was even one letter from a man who declared that he himself had committed the murder and would go on the stand and confess all for five dollars. This man omitted

the usual formality of signing his name.

Beside the letters lay the morning papers, all of them, with the accounts of the trial marked heavily with blue pencil, ready to be clipped and pasted in the office scrap book. As Langdon drew out his chair and sat down the headlines of the topmost paper caught his eye.

DANIELS TO DEFEY HOODOO TO REOPEN THE COVINGTON

Defying the Theatrical Hoodoo Which the Superstitious Declare Hangs Over the Famous Old Covington Theatre, Mr. Daniels Announces That Plans Are Now Under Way to Reopen the Playhouse Early Next Month With a Musical Comedy.

WILL ANNOUNCE NAME OF PLAY LATER.

With a little whistle of surprise Langdon dropped into his seat and scanned the article, which was an interview with Daniels. Its details were non-essential, dealing mostly with the question of the superstition clinging about theatres connected in any way with tragedy, but the main fact stood out boldly. Daniels had secured fresh backing and was to start again.

With the paper crumpled in his hand Langdon stared out of the window, trying to fit this new fact into the intricate puzzle that had grown out of the death of James Pollock.

Everyone knew now that Daniels himself had lost all he possessed and had also lost the money Pollock had promised him through the death of the latter.

Who, then, was the new angel, whose name did not appear in the carefully worded announcement from Daniels?

Was it not possible, after all, that Daniels had secured more money from Pollock than anyone knew of, and chose this method of using it to avoid clashing with the lawyers of Pollock's estate?

Was it not possible, too, that Daniels knew far more about the tragedy than anyone suspected? That he had turned this information to very good account financially and that there were influential people identified with the underworld of the city who for personal or political reasons were willing to put up a large amount of money provided they could thereby silence the theatrical manager and keep him from revealing any more on the witness stand?

Daniels, Langdon knew, was ruled by a very lax code of morals and was not above profiting from the suppression of evidence that had a great financial value.

He had got no further than this point in his soliloquy, when the office boy appeared at the door, a little flushed and apologetic.

"I know you don't want to be disturbed, Mr. Langdon," he said unceremoniously, "but there's a man out here insists on seeing you. Says he'll wait till it's convenient for you to talk to him."

"Tell him I'm very busy now, and must go into court soon. Ask him to talk to Mr. Barrett or Mr. Rogers."

The boy went out, but in a moment or so returned.

"He says they won't do, sir. He must see you. He says to tell you his name is Daniels and he has come about the trial."

Langdon lifted his head quickly. "A short fat man?" he queried, and the boy nodded. "Tell him to come in," said the young attorney, and

smoothing out the crumpled morning paper he laid it back with the others and smiled, a trifle grimly.

Prosperity had already laid its hand upon Daniels—at least his clothes made that evident. He was spruce dressed, and recently shaved and carried a cane. There was indeed an assumption of jaunty confidence about him that would have deceived almost anyone, but Langdon's keen eyes saw the harsh lines at the corners of the mouth, and the sombre anxiety in the restless eyes.

"You didn't expect to see me, did you, Langdon?" he said as the lawyer rose to greet him. Philip smiled.

"No," he answered, "I didn't hope for anything so opportune. I was just wondering where I could get you on the phone. I've just seen this morning's paper," he added significantly; and Daniels shifted uneasily in his chair.

"You mean about the theatre?" he said. "Well, it's kind of good news for me. I lost about all I had on the Page venture and I was beginning to feel the rocks when this new syndicate offered to give me a chance to put over a musical comedy."

"Who is in the syndicate?"

"They don't want the names known. They are men pretty high up in politics and I don't mind telling you, in the liquor interests. That sort of fellow loves to take a flyer in the show business, and for once I was Johnnie on the spot." He laughed, and pulled out a cigar. "You don't mind if I smoke, do you? Have one?"

Langdon declined, but produced a box of matches for his visitor.

"I'm very glad, for your sake, that you were," said Langdon drily; then,



"For once I was Johnnie on the spot."

with a sudden change of tone he leaned across the desk crying harshly. "Has that anything to do with your testimony in court? Was that the real reason you came back to the city?"

Daniels winced. "That's what I came to see you about," he said huskily. "I admit I didn't tell everything that I might have on the stand. What I held back may have nothing to do with this case. I held it back," he added significantly, "for several reasons, some of which you may know."

"What I know or don't know has nothing to do with the matter," retorted Langdon, but with a change of

tone. "You haven't answered my question yet."

"I'm not going to answer it," said Daniels after a long pause. "Maybe I'll have to later on, but not now. Only, see here, Langdon, I've got to know one thing: has Mary got the ghost of a chance to get off? Do you think that what-aits-name psychosists will get her out of prison? I ain't got weak nerves or anything; but I don't mind saying that this thing has got my goat. For a while I didn't read the papers, but yesterday I did and I found that—that things didn't look as bright for the little girl as I had imagined. It looks, in fact, as if she was up against it hard. As if—unless something is done she'll go to the chair." And he calmly puffed his cigar.

"Not! No!" cried Langdon with a shudder. "Never that. It won't come to that. I can promise you. They can't prove her guilty, but there are lots of different degrees of murder, and escaping the chair doesn't mean setting her free."

The two men sat silent for a long time, facing each other across the desk, antagonistic, yet linked by some thought that neither would put into words. At last Daniels spoke.

"I'm no snitcher," he said hoarsely. "I don't believe in telling all you know and strain up a lot of mud when you ain't sure it will do any good. But I'd do a lot for Mary Page. She's on the level. She didn't shoot James Pollock—I'm dead sure of that. And I won't



She Knew That the Agony of Her Suffering Was Doubled by That of Langdon.

see her harmed if I can stop it, no matter what the price is."

"Thank you," said Langdon, but Daniels frowned.

"You've got no cause to thank me," he said. "I just wanted you to know. I want to be kept posted. I don't want to tell anything that ain't necessary, but if worse comes to the worst I'll tell it all."

"Is that your promise?"

"Yes." Abruptly Daniels put on his hat, and without a word of parting marched out of the door leaving Langdon staring through narrowed lids after his retreating form, as he reached for the telephone.

He was late getting into court, but whatever conflicting emotions the promise made by Daniels had roused in him were hidden by the smiling mask of confidence and ease with which he reassured not only Mary but the spectators.

To Mary, that smile and the deep abiding tenderness in his eyes were the two things that made it possible to bear with patience the weary strain of the passing days. The first shuddering horror of the tragedy had passed, it is true, and in spite of its occasional return in the quiet of sleepless nights, it had given place to a less poignant though bitter enough suffering.

With the passing of the acute agony, however, the little things at first submerged came to the surface and became a source of daily martyrdom. The hard bed; the coarse food; the lack of privacy; the limited conveniences; the roughness of the police and the suffocating sense of being a prisoner; of being denied the fresh air and the sunshine and the right to go where she pleased, seemed almost unbearable.

Yet she knew that the agony of her suffering was doubled by that of Langdon; that he went through vicariously all she endured as well as bearing his own burden, and so for his sake she bore up, drinking in courage from the love that enveloped her whenever his eyes met hers.

For just as the trial and what had gone before it had stripped her of her woman's subtleties and coquetties, so had it stripped Langdon's love of the masculine dress of publicity, and he cared nothing even if all those in the courtroom read the secrets of his heart.

On this particular morning, however, Mary fancied that there was a new meaning in his smile, and a light of hope in his eyes, and there was keen interest in her own gaze when the first witness was called.

"John McGlone!"

He was a burly man in a loud waistcoat, with hair that grew low on his forehead and was parted in the middle into two careful curls in a fashion popular with a certain type of bar-keeper and barber.

He showed no signs of nervousness. On the contrary, he seemed somewhat



"John McGlone!"

pleased with his importance and answered Langdon's first questions with a glibness that held a touch of the pompous.

He was, he said, owner and proprietor of a large "retail liquor house" and had formerly been "on the force."

"Did you ever know James Pollock?" asked Langdon.

"Sure! I knew Jim well. I bought most of my fancy wines through him, and he used to drop in occasionally when he was passin', just to say howdy."

"Did he ever bring friends with him?"

"Oh, sometimes. Not often." There was a conversational tone in the witness's voice.

"Did you ever hear him quarrel with anyone while in your saloon?"

"No. Jim was sharp with his tongue when he'd been drinkin', but everybody knew he didn't mean it. He was a generous feller, too, always made up for his madness in a free-handed way. Besides, I wouldn't stand fer no fight-in' in my house. It was a respectable place, I'll have you know!"

"And yet," broke in Langdon sharply, "isn't it true that you twice warned James Pollock that he had better look out or somebody would 'get him'?"

McGlone shifted uneasily, and his pompous air faded.

"Yes," he said. "That's true, but it wasn't particularly Jim's quarrelling that made me say it."

"Did you ever hear anyone make any threats against Mr. Pollock?"

"Yes. You see, Jim was mixed up in some dirty work—"

"I object!" interrupted the District Attorney, leaping to his feet. "Not only to the question of Mr. Langdon, but to the endeavor on the part of the witness to traduce a man who is



"Jim was sharp with his tongue when he'd been drinkin'."

dead. Your Honor, Mr. Langdon has declared the defence to be 'repressed psychosis', and under those circumstances I declare the present testimony to be irrelevant, and request that it be stricken out."

"My defence is still 'repressed psychosis', your Honor, retorted Langdon

quickly, "but I call the attention of the court to the statement made by Dr. Foster, that if Miss Page was suffering from that when James Pollock was shot she would not have known whether her own or another hand fired the fatal shot. Your Honor, I am endeavoring by this witness to bring to light some obscure facts in this case, and crave the leniency of the court to continue the present testimony." His tone was earnest and the justice of what he asked was evident to all.

"I think you may continue, Mr. Langdon," said the Judge after a moment's thought. "I cannot sustain the objection of Mr. Dallas."

With a shrug of resignation the Prosecutor dropped back into his seat, and Langdon, turning again to McGlone, who looked bewildered by the battle of the attorneys, said quietly:

"I will repeat my question, Mr. McGlone. Did you ever hear anyone make any threats against Mr. Pollock?"

"Well, as I said—"

But this time it was his Honor who interrupted.

"You must remember, Mr. McGlone, that in answering questions you must use only the direct yes or no. Do not digress or say why such threats were made. That question has not been asked you."

"Then—yes," grumbled McGlone, "I heard fellers make threats against him twice."

"Where?"

"In front of the bar. He was mixed up with some men that didn't like the way he ran things. He treated 'em all like dogs, and I thought that sometime when one of 'em was full of whiskey he'd probably carry out the threat."

"Did you warn Mr. Pollock?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Oh, Jim just laughed and said he knew of four people who would like to



"I object!" interrupted the District Attorney, leaping to his feet.

see him get his, and he wasn't excluding the fair sex."

A whisper of excitement ran through the room and Mary shuddered. Had he meant her? Surely not. But the words brought a frown to Langdon's face and a grim smile to that of the prosecutor.

"Did he," the question rapped sharply, "say that he took any precautions against attack?"

"Yes. He told me he packed a couple of guns that would make any fool who got after him, bark up the wrong tree."

"He carried two revolvers?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever see them?"

"Not as I remember. He said they were beauts, and that they couldn't be duplicated on this side of the Atlantic."

Suddenly the prosecutor leaned forward alertly. He saw in an instant where this testimony was leading, and waited, breathless, for the inevitable question that would follow.

"Mr. McGlone, were those revolvers mates? Was it, in fact, a pair of pistols that James Pollock owned?"

"I couldn't say for certain. He used to call 'em the twins, but I never saw them meself."

"That is all, thank you, Mr. McGlone," said Langdon, and sat down triumphantly, while the jury, leaning forward, stared down at the revolver from which that fatal shot had been fired. If James Pollock had owned a pair of them, who could say whether the one found on the floor was or was not the one that Mary Page had put into her bag at the theatre!

[To be continued.]

Benzol Production.

Connected with the coke industry was the completion during the last summer of a number of large plants for the recovery of benzol from by-product coke oven gas. This gives the United States its first output of this material, so important as a raw material in the manufacture of high explosives and chemical dyes.